



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Getting the Lead Out

Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels Related to Home Renovation, Repair, and Painting Activities — New York, 2006–2007

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

If you're planning to put on a fresh coat of paint, have that old kitchen updated, or new windows installed--beware. There might be danger lurking on those windows and walls. Many older homes, particularly those built before 1978, have paint with high concentrations of lead.

Dr. Chinaro Kennedy is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Environmental Health. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of taking precautions against lead poisoning when remodeling older homes. Welcome to the show, Chinaro.

[Dr. Kennedy] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Chinaro, the study I referred to talks about lead poisoning from paint. Isn't the sale of lead-based paint prohibited in the U.S?

[Dr. Kennedy] Yes, it is prohibited and it has been prohibited since 1978.

[Dr. Gaynes] How many homes still have high concentrations of lead?

[Dr. Kennedy] There are approximately 24 million homes in the United States that have evidence of deteriorated lead-based paint. The original paint in most homes built before 1978 was lead-based. Of the 24 million homes, 4 million homes house children between the ages of one to five years old. Children one to five years old are most at risk of becoming lead-poisoned.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where is the lead most commonly found in these homes?

[Dr. Kennedy] On the walls and on the window sills. Also, in the dust that lurks in the soil or on the floors from the paint that chips off the walls.

[Dr. Gaynes] Chinaro, what are the symptoms of lead poisoning?

[Dr. Kennedy] Actually, lead poisoning can go symptom free. We know that at low levels, we begin to have learning deficits. At high levels, that can actually lead to death.

[Dr. Gaynes] Should people in older homes have lead-based paint removed?

[Dr. Kennedy] Definitely; it should be removed, however, it should be removed by a certified contractor, not by the homeowner him or herself.

[Dr. Gaynes] What steps should people take to avoid lead exposure during a repair or remodel of their home?

[Dr. Kennedy] There are five main steps. The first step is to isolate the area that is being remodeled. This may mean putting up plastic sheeting around the room or rooms that are being remodeled or tarp around the areas that are being remodeled. Secondly, if there are vulnerable populations, for example pregnant women or young children between the ages of one to five years old, they should not come in the area that is being remodeled, which may mean them not living in the home while it's being remodeled. Third, they should thoroughly clean the area that they're renovating, on a daily basis. For example damp mopping the floors. Fourth, we should not have any lead dust fumes being created or lead dust itself being created while the remodeling is being done. This may mean having a hepa vac or some type of vacuuming system to vacuum out the dust from the home. And fifth, there should be monitoring of the blood lead levels of those who are in contact with the renovated area.

[Dr. Gaynes] Chinaro, where can listeners get more information about preventing lead poisoning?

[Dr. Kennedy] They can go to www.cdc.gov and search on "lead."

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Chinaro. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Chinaro Kennedy about the importance of taking precautions against lead poisoning when remodeling older homes.

Remember, if you are remodeling or repairing a home built before 1978 with lead-based paint, have a certified contractor take precautions while working to protect himself and your family.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.